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NSC BRIEFING

24 September 1953

NEW SOVIET CONSUMER GOODS POLICY

A. Change from Stalinist policy

1. New measures are underway to increase production and distribution of consumer goods.

2. But predominant emphasis on heavy defense industries continues.

B. Immediate measures to implement new program

1. Immediate measures already taken include:

a. Increased imports of consumer goods:

(1) butter from Denmark and the Netherlands.

(2) fish from Iceland and Norway.

(3) meat from Australia and

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25X1

25X1

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New Zealand.

(4) textiles from France  
and Belgium.

b. Withdrawals from reserves.

(1) These appear smaller in  
volume than imports, but  
withdrawals of a number  
of consumer items have  
increased in frequency.

C. Additional measures now underway

1. Additional consumer goods will come  
mainly from increased domestic pro-  
duction.
2. Malenkov's August speech announced  
special expenditure plans to increase  
the sale of consumer goods by 10% a-  
bove the amount originally scheduled  
for the last three-quarters of 1953.
3. The government has announced the  
additional expenditure of 15 billion

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25X1

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rubles in 1953 and 35 billion rubles in 1954 for the food production required by this program.

D. Reallocation of industrial resources

1. Government calls upon the Defense and Aviation Industries to retool some facilities for production of limited quantities of agricultural equipment.
2. Heavy industry participates to a greater extent in production of consumer goods.

25X1

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3. Light industry has been given higher priorities on raw materials and

25X1

labor and has been ordered to increase its output.

E. Economic implication of the new program

1. The new consumer goods program will not necessitate major cutbacks in 1952 levels of armaments and heavy industrial production.
2. It is likely that the recent suspension of work on several costly Stalinist construction projects may have been designed to permit a shift in resources to consumer goods production.
3. Government stands to gain increased popularity from new consumer goods policy.
4. Will also gain greater worker productivity through added material incentives.